

Pilcher Park: A Nature Preserve

In June of 2017, Pilcher Park became an Illinois Nature Preserve, which helps protect the high-quality forest. Pilcher Park is one of the remaining forests in the Chicago region and in the state of Illinois. Joliet Park District retains ownership of the park, but the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources oversee the protection and stewardship of its natural features. After retaining the Illinois Nature Preserve status, several rules and guidelines for park use have changed. A few of them are listed here: leashed dogs are welcome, stay on designated trails while hiking, no dumping of trash or yard waste, and no removal of plants, fungi, or animals from the park. For a complete list of rules, please visit joliepark.org. Thank you for your cooperation in following the rules and keeping Pilcher Park's status maintained.

Pilcher Park: Past & Present

Pilcher Park is a land rich in history. Our school-age visitors look at us wide-eyed, barely believing that this land was once home to a large Potawatomie Indian camp. By 1829, when the first settlers arrived near Joliet, the Potawatomie's camp extended from the Trail that is now Gougar Road west to the edge of the forest, and from Hickory Creek on the south nearly to Route 6 in the north. Visit the Potawatomie Indian burial mound near Birdhaven Park on Gougar and take a trip back in time.

During the late 1800s, the land that would be Pilcher Park was owned by two influential families in Joliet. Harlow N. Higinbotham, a Marshall Field Company executive and president of the Chicago World's Fair and Columbian Exposition, purchased this land in 1890. He planted many trees, improved roads, and built bridges throughout his "arboretum". Robert and Nora Pilcher later bought these 320 acres from the Higinbothams, donating the land to the City of Joliet on July 27, 1920. We honor Mr. Pilcher's request still, "that the land be left in its wild and natural state except for necessary improvements." His vision was ahead of his time and is the foundation of our mission at Pilcher Park Nature Center.

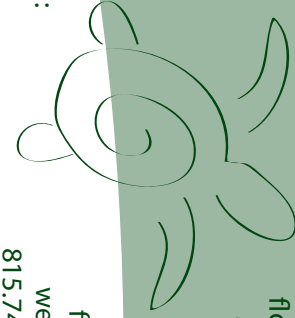
Pilcher Park Nature Center

Located at the western edge of Pilcher Park is our log cabin Nature Center, where you can visit animals, enjoy exhibits, and meet our friendly staff. The Nature Center teaches thousands of students every year about the wonders of their environment. Thousands of parents and grandparents bring their children in to see the free exhibits each year.

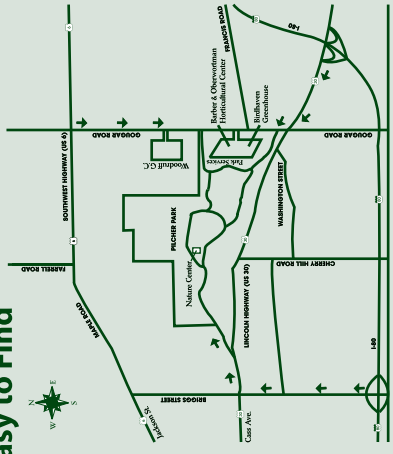
Check out our current program listings at the Nature Center or in the Joliet Park District Program Catalog to find a fun and educational family campfire, pond study, or maple syrup breakfast. Book your school group or scout troop field trip at the Nature Center for an unforgettable outdoor experience close to home! We also are one of the only facilities in the region to host overnight adventures for groups of 20 or more...call for more information: 815.741.7277 or visit joliepark.org.

Bird Haven Greenhouse

The Bird Haven Greenhouse and Conservatory, a historic example of Italian Renaissance-style architecture, was built in the early 1900s. The Greenhouse hosts two annual flower shows in winter and spring, and its cacti and tropical rooms are open year-round to the public. They host a poinsettia sale on the first weekend of December and a plant sale on the first weekend of May. The grounds are magnificent in the summer, inviting hummingbirds and butterflies to dance from flower to flower in search of a sugary snack. Many visitors know someone who has exchanged wedding vows indoors on the bridge or outside in the garden gazebo. Call the Greenhouse for information on flower show dates, times, and wedding reservation information: 815.741.7278.



We're Easy to Find



I-80 east to Rt. 30, left on Rt. 30, right on Gougar Rd. Entrance to park on west side. Follow signs to Nature Center. Greenhouse and Horticultural Center located on Gougar Rd., immediately past entrance to park.

Board of Commissioners

- Sue Gulas - President
- Joe Clement - Vice President
- Jennifer Jobe-Gavin
- Kevin Paul
- Bill Tatro
- Brad Staab - Executive Director
- Katie Zaban - Nature Center Manager
- Kevin Eberhard - Chief Horticulturist



Trail Map & Park Information

General Information
Hours of Operation

Pilcher Park
Open daily sunup. to sunset, year-round.

Pilcher Park Nature Center
2501 Highland Park Dr.
September through May: 9:00a.m. - 3:00p.m.
June through August: 9:00a.m. - 4:30p.m.

Horticultural Center
227 N.Gougar Rd.
815.741.7278
Hall Information
Cutting Edge Catering
815.725.9001

Bird Haven Greenhouse
225 N.Gougar Rd.
Daily 8:00a.m. - 4:30p.m.

Weddings
Call 815.741.7278 for availability

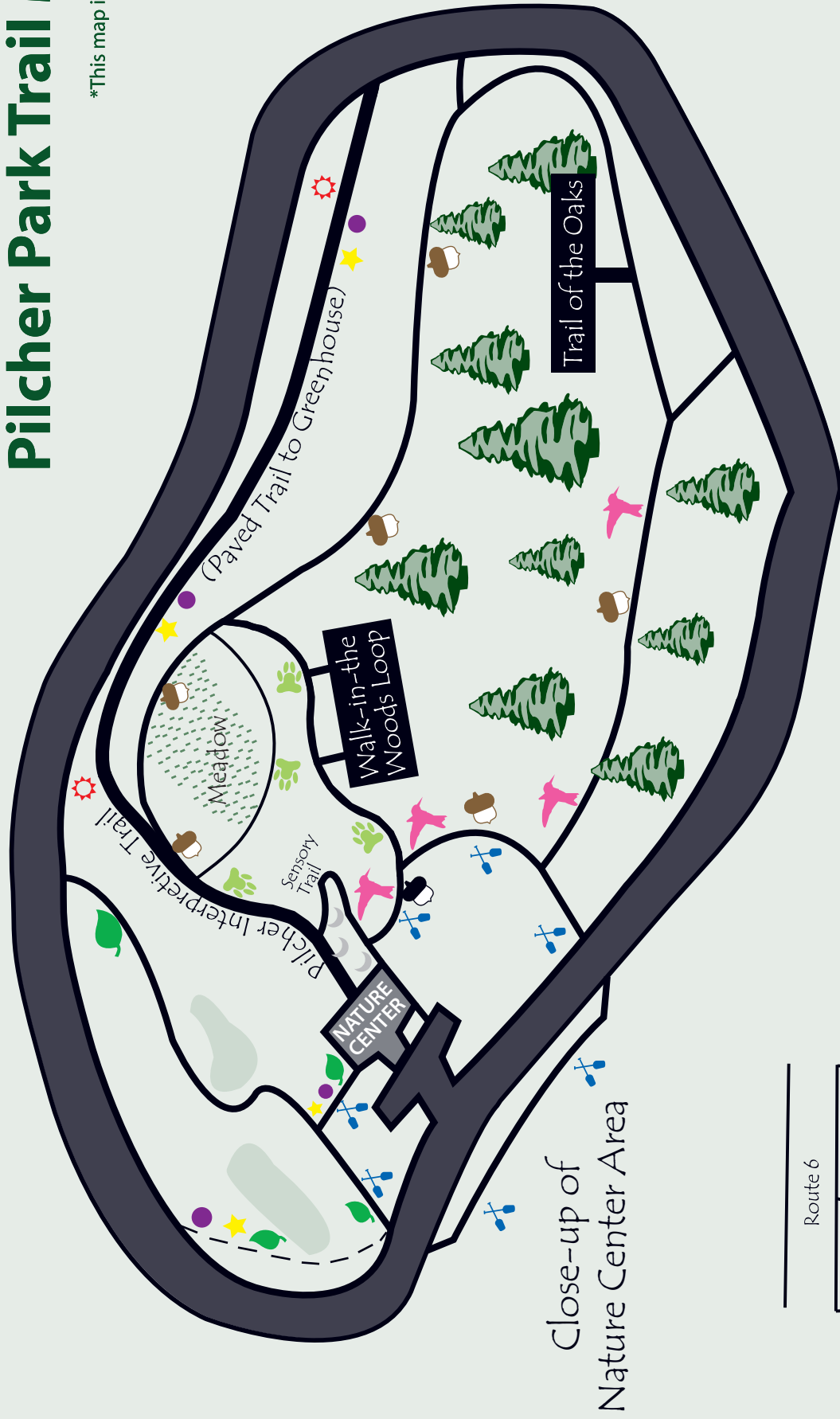
Rental and Program Information
Pilcher Park Nature Center 815.741.7277
Bird Haven Greenhouse 815.741.7278
Horticultural Center 815.741.7278



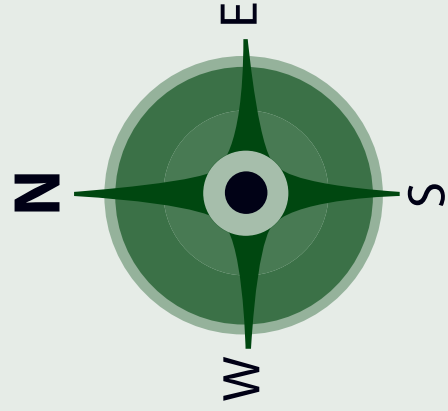
2501 Highland Park Drive • Joliet • IL 60432

Pilcher Park Trail Map

*This map is not to scale



Close-up of Nature Center Area



Overview of Pilcher Park Hiking Trails

Trail Colors & Symbols**	Trail Name & Description**
	Outer Loop: paved or limestone loop trail, long hike, hills
	Valley Road Loop: limestone loop trail, long hike, hills
	Bluff Trail: rustic loop trail, medium hike, hills
	Pilcher Interpretive Trail: paved trail between Greenhouse & Nature Center, long hike
	Sensory Trail: paved trail, short hike
	Walk-in-the-Woods: level rustic loop trail, short hike
	Trail of the Oaks: level rustic loop trail, medium hike
	Hummingbird Lane: level rustic trail between Greenhouse & Nature Center, long hike
	Hickory Creek Trail: rustic loop trail along Hickory Creek, short hike
	Wildflower Walk: level rustic loop trail starting & ending at Greenhouse, medium hike
	Artesian Trail: level rustic trail between Flowing Well & Nature Center, long hike
	Hoberg Trail: limestone trail, medium hike

*symbols are painted the following colors on trail signs
 **loops start & end at Nature Center unless noted

